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Aon Opens New Global Market For Intellectual Property Protection;
Companies Can Now Protect In Excess of \$100 Million in Intellectual Property
Business Wire

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CHICAGO, Feb 14, 2000 (BUSINESS WIRE) - Aon Corporation (Aon) announced today the introduction of a new risk transfer service that for the first time allows companies to secure in excess of \$100 million of blanket protection to recover damages or enforce rights for patents, trademarks, copyrights and other intellectual property assets.

Aon, a leader in innovative risk management services, said this new market reflects the growing importance of intellectual property and other intangible assets. As one example, patent-licensing revenues are expected to exceed \$500 billion by 2005, up from \$100 billion in 1998.

"The spectrum of business risk is expanding and changing quickly," said Patrick G. Ryan, chairman and CEO of Aon Corporation. "Companies are realizing that their overall risk profile is shifting from hard assets - property, plants and equipment - to so-called intangible assets, such as patents and copyrights. The issue of how to protect intellectual property is now a pre-eminent concern among CEOs."

The increasing importance of intellectual property can be seen over the course of the last two decades. In 1982, intellectual property losses were estimated at \$5 million; by 1998 it had exploded to \$3.8 billion. The manufacturing sector has been the hardest hit over the last two decades, accounting for 37 percent of infringement suits, with high-tech accounting for another 34 percent.

"With recent legal changes creating the ability to patent software and business processes, old business models are becoming obsolete," Ryan said. "All types of intellectual property - including product designs, brands and trade secrets - now have a huge effect on business and, ultimately, shareholder value."

Traditionally, companies have been able to obtain only low-limit coverage in specific instances. Aon's new consulting and risk transfer service enables companies to gain blanket coverage across all intellectual property. The consultation and placement of coverage is for either defense costs and damages for those companies concerned about infringing upon others' intellectual property, or enforcement by those wary of having their intellectual property infringed upon.

Aon's new service has been several years in the making. The work was spearheaded by Joe Morahan, chairman of Aon's Financial Services Group and Judith Pearson, executive vice president of Aon's Financial Services Group.

* Aon Corporation is a holding company that comprises a family of insurance brokerage, consulting and underwriting subsidiaries. Aon's common stock (NYSE: AOC) is listed on the New York, Chicago and London stock exchanges. (www.aon.com) *Sources: Inc. Magazine, FSG Intellectual Property Large Loss Database, FSG Intellectual Property Statistical Database.

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